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(54) Title: **IL-15 BINDING SITE FOR IL15-RALPHA AND SPECIFIC IL-15 MUTANTS HAVING AGONISTS/ANTAGONISTS ACTIVITY**

(57) Abstract: The present invention relates to the identification of an epitope in human Interleukin-15 (IL-15) that is responsible for binding to the interleukin-15 receptor α -chain. Two IL-15 regions are involved in the formation of this epitope: the first region (₄₄LLELQVISL₅₂, peptide 1) corresponds to a sequence located in the B helix and the second (₆₄ENLIH₆₈, peptide 2 or ₆₄ENLIL₆₉, peptide 2a) to a sequence located in helix C. Muteins displaying agonist or antagonist properties are described, and may be useful as therapeutic agents.

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